

168. *Tringa Merula*. Le Merle-d'eau. **Wasseramsel**.

Tringa superne fusco-nigricans; genis, gutture, collo inferiore et pectore niveis; ventre supremo fusco-rufescente. imo ventre, rectricibusque nigricantibus.

Mus. Schaeffer. No. 68.

Briss. Av. V. 252. 19. Le Merle d'eau.

Linn. S. N. 12. 290. 5. *Sturnus cinclus*.

Scop. Bemerk. n. 223. **Die Wasseramsel.**"

On p. 49 of the same work we find: —

161. *Vanellus capella*. Le Vanneau. **Gybitz**.

Vanellus cristatus, superne viridi aureus, inferne albus; capite superiore nigro-viridante; crista nigra; taenia infra oculos nigricante; gutture albo; collo inferiore nigro viridante, pennis in apice albo fimbriatis; rectricibus decem intermediis prima medietate candidis, altera nigris, apice albido marginatis, utrinque extima candida, macula nigra interius insignata.

Mus. Schaeffer. No. 7.

Briss. Av. V. 94. I t. 8. f. 1. Le Vanneau.

Linn. S. N. 12. 248.2. *Tringa Vanellus*.

Frisch. Av. 213. *Vanellus*. **Kywitz**.

Schaeff. Orn. t. 69.

Naturf. XIII, St. p. 215. n. 122. **Der Kiebitz**.

Scop. Bemerk. n. 141. **Der Kybitz.**"

Washington, D. C., December 7, 1883.

A SECOND SEASON IN TEXAS.*

BY NATHAN CLIFFORD BROWN.

IN the winter of 1882-1883, the writer made a second visit to the village of Boerne, in Southwestern Texas, and devoted the ten weeks subsequent to January 27, 1883, to field work amongst the birds of the vicinity. Throughout this period the country presented an appearance very different from that familiar in 1880: instead of desolate expanses of bare earth, a green sward was almost everywhere to be seen; in the fields were rank growths of frost-killed weeds; and along the creek were patches of coarse grasses and even occasional little sedgy morasses. The creek itself, which during the season of 1880 only at long intervals accumulated a sufficient volume of water to flow with an

* See Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VII, pp. 33-42.

uninterrupted current, was a constant and respectable stream. Both from the severity of the cold and from its continuousness, the winter was extremely rigorous; the mercury ranged between 20° and 25° with unpleasant frequency, and once fell so low as 10°.

Under circumstances so different, it is to be expected that there should be a difference in the results of the work of the two seasons. As a matter of fact, variation in manner of occurrence is apparent in the case of almost every species. The aggregate of individuals was much greater in 1883, the increase in numbers being, except in a few cases, proportionate. The most prominent exceptions were *Zonotrichia gambeli intermedia*, *Dendræca coronata*, *Dendræca chrysoparia* (three specimens), *Helminthophila celata*, *Eremophila alpestris chrysolaema*, *Anthus ludovicianus* and *Sialia arctica*, which were decidedly less numerous; and *Certhia familiaris rufa*, *Salpinctes obsoletus*, *Neocorys spragueii*, *Dendræca blackburnæ*, *Vireo atricapillus*, *Siurus motacilla*, *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*, *Rhynchophanes maccowni*, *Spizella breweri*, *Calamospiza bicolor*, *Podasocys montanus*, and *Plotus anhinga*, of which nothing was seen.

Melospiza lincolni and *Chondestes grammica* were abundant winter residents in 1883; in 1880 the former figured only as a migrant, the latter as a migrant occasionally occurring in winter.

The following additional species and varieties were detected in 1883:—

1. *Hylocichla unalascae pallasi* (Cab.) Ridg. HERMIT THRUSH.—A specimen taken. March 16, from a small flock of apparently the same race. Examples approaching var. *auduboni* were taken at intervals.*

2. *Sialia mexicana Swainson*. CALIFORNIAN BLUEBIRD.—On January 28, half-a-dozen Bluebirds appeared in a field adjoining the hotel. Their restlessness and peculiar behavior led me to sally out in pursuit of a specimen, which I secured with some difficulty. It proved to be a female of the present species. The rest of the birds flew away, at the report of my gun, and nothing further was seen of their kind until the afternoon of March 1. At this date I was collecting among the Balcones Hills, a few miles from Boerne, in a section of country covered with a sparse growth of live-oak. My attention being attracted by a faint twittering over my head, I looked upward and beheld eight or ten Bluebirds descending almost perpendicularly, as if from a great height. As before, they proved restless and shy, and, after a single discharge of my gun, which secured a handsome male, they left the vicinity.

* See note on var. *auduboni*, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. VII. p. 127.

The Californian Bluebird does not appear to have been met with in Texas before, and I find but one record of its occurrence so far east as the ninety-ninth meridian, in the United States at large.*

3. *Lanivireo solitarius* (Vieill.) Bd. SOLITARY VIREO.—One specimen (♀), procured from a company of Chickadees, Kinglets, and other small birds, in a post-oak grove, February 3. The testimony of all collectors in Texas indicates the rarity of this species in the State. So far as I am aware, it has not hitherto been detected in winter.

4. *Zonotrichia albicollis* (Gm.) Bp. WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.—One specimen taken, March 9; others seen upon March 30 and April 6. Boerne is far to the south and west of the ordinary habitat of this Sparrow, which has not before been taken in Texas limits and but once attributed to the State. Dr. Merrill states † that he heard its unmistakable song at Fort Brown, on May 11, 1877.

5. *Spizella socialis* (*nec arizonæ*) (Wils.) Bp. CHIPPING SPARROW.—Apparently common. Several taken.

6. *Pyrrhuloxia sinuata* Bon. TEXAS CARDINAL.—Two specimens—a female, February 2, and a male, April 5—procured in bushes along the creek. These captures considerably extend the known range of the species in the State, but few examples having been noted north of the Rio Grande valley.

7. *Tyrannus carolinensis* (Linn.) Temm. KINGBIRD.—One specimen, April 4.

8. *Sayornis sayi* (Bon.) Baird. SAY'S PEWEE.—On the morning of February 5, during the prevalence of a severe norther, several of this species, accompanied by other birds, were found under the lee of a stone-wall, near the creek, and one was secured. On the following day a solitary individual was seen and obtained. Both birds were much emaciated.

9. *Picus pubescens* Linn. DOWNY WOODPECKER.—A single specimen, February 3.

10. *Circus hudsonius* (Linn.) Vieill. MARSH HAWK.—A female seen on March 16; an adult male on March 27.

11. *Nyctiardea grisea nævia* (Bodd.) Allen. NIGHT HERON.—An immature female, taken February 2.

12. *Podilymbus podiceps* (Linn.) Lawr. THICK-BILLED GREBE.—During the latter part of March, several individuals were noted in the Boerne Mill-pond. On March 21, a specimen in winter plumage was killed and presented to me by a local sportsman.

13. *Anas boschas* Linn. MALLARD.—Occasionally seen in small flocks or singly.

Of the six species seen but unsatisfactorily identified in 1880, two (*Ictinia subcærulea*? and *Larus*—?) were not met with; two (*Strix nebulosa*? and *Buteo abbreviatus*?) were seen but not secured, and two were identified by capture. viz. :—

* See Hatch, Birds of Minnesota, Ann. Rep. State Geologist, 1880 (?), p. 361.

† Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1878, p. 126.

1. *Trochilus alexandri* Bourc. & Muls. BLACK-CHINNED HUMMING-BIRD. — I procured a single male specimen of this diminutive species on April 5. No others were seen during my stay. There is no previous record of the bird's occurrence in Texas other than Mr. Purdie's,* which notes the capture of two examples in Gillespie and San Saba Counties, in April, 1878. The distribution of the species in Arizona and Utah, however, renders it probable that it is not a rare summer resident in the present locality.

2. *Buteo borealis* (Gm.) Vieill. RED-TAILED HAWK. — Some half-dozen pairs of Red-tailed Hawks were found to be resident in the immediate vicinity of the village. Two fresh eggs were taken on March 22, the nest being placed about forty feet from the ground, in a somewhat swampy growth of hard-wood trees.

The two skins in the collection are intermediate between *borealis* proper and var. *krideri*, and, without specimens of the latter form for comparison, it is somewhat difficult to decide under which name they should be included. Upon the whole, however, they appear most closely allied to *borealis*. The dorsal coloration is not appreciably different from that of Maine examples, and the same is true of the ground-color of the underparts. The streaks upon the throat and abdomen are fewer, narrower, and paler than in the eastern birds, and there are no rufous markings upon the breast. The tail in both of the Texas specimens is of a pale, dull rufous; that of one (♂) is crossed, except upon the central two feathers, where it is only indicated, by the subterminal black band of *borealis*; that of the other (♀) has this band only outlined by obscure and irregular spots.

Mr. Dresser found the Red-tailed Hawk abundant throughout Texas, but it was not met with at all by Mr. Sennett nor by Dr. Nehrling, and Dr. Merrill speaks of having seen only a single pair.

In the collection of 1883, as in that of the former season, are many aberrant specimens, the varietal position of which cannot be definitively fixed but must depend upon the taste of the student. The additional material before me does not seem to require a change of previous identification, except in one instance. I now believe the western form of the Robin (var. *propinqua*) to have been included in my list upon insufficient evidence, all of the specimens from Boerne being nearer *migratoria* proper,† of which some of them are typical.

A very curious lot are the Horned Larks (*Eremophilæ*) from this locality. I am far from satisfied to let them stand as var. *chrysolema*, but after much study of the specimens and a careful examination of many others from different parts of North Amer-

* See Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, Vol. IV, p. 60.

† My attention was called to the probability of this fact, at the time a different identification was decided upon, by Mr. William Brewster.

ica, including the entire series of the Smithsonian Institution, I find myself unable to dispose of them in any more satisfactory manner. The creation of a new race appears wholly unjustifiable, owing to the confusion in the literature of the species, the instability of the races at present recognized, and the very great individual variation that prevails amongst birds from the same locality. A final resting-place for the many puzzling specimens from the West will be found only after such a thorough overhauling of the genus *Eremophila* as cannot be based upon existing material.

NOTES ON THE NESTING HABITS OF THE YELLOW-THROATED VIREO (*LANIVIREO FLAVIFRONS*).

BY N. S. GOSS.

ON the 9th of May, 1877, I found in the timber near Neosho Falls, Kansas, a nest of this bird (a pendant one, as are all the Vireos' nests I have found) attached to branches of a very small horizontal limb of a large hickory tree, about twenty feet from the ground, and ten feet below the limbs that formed the top of the tree. In the forks of the tree the Cooper's Hawks were nesting, and I discovered the Vireo and its nest in watching the Hawks — or rather the man I had hired to climb the tree to the Hawk's nest. The little bird at first flew off, but on his near approach returned and suffered him to bend the limb towards the tree and cover her with his hand on the nest. The twig was quickly broken and the bird and nest lowered by a line, in a small covered basket taken to collect the eggs of the Hawk. Such manifestations of courage and love, so rare and exceptional, touched me to the heart, and it was hard to make up my mind to rob and kill the bird and her mate, scolding in the tree-top. I can only offer in extenuation that they were the first I had met with in this State, and the *strong* desire to have them in my collection. The nest was made of, and fastened to the limb with, silk-like threads and bits of cotton from plants, fastened together